

THE COLLAPSE OF “SEPARATISM” AMONG FUNDAMENTAL BAPTISTS

September 28, 2011 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

We are witnessing a widespread collapse of separatism in Independent Baptist churches.

Since the old fundamentalist movement was captured by New Evangelicalism in the 1950s, biblical separatism has largely been an Independent Baptist phenomenon. Some Presbyterian and Bible and Brethren churches have maintained a separatist stance, but the number is very, very small compared to those of Independent Baptists. Thousands of IBaptist churches were planted during the last half of the twentieth century, and many others came out of Southern Baptist, Conservative Baptist, etc., to fly the flag of separatism.

A dramatic change is taking place, though. The scenario that existed when I was saved in the early 1970s and joined an Independent Baptist church by personal conviction is radically different from the one that exists today.

What is happening now among fundamental Baptist churches is nearly a mirror image of what happened in the 1950s within fundamentalism-evangelicalism (the terms were synonymous when New Evangelicalism exploded on the scene). At its heart, it is the rejection of “separatism.”

When I was saved nearly 40 years ago, the major thing that distinguished fundamental Baptists from Southern Baptists was biblical separation, but that distinction is disappearing and there is a merging of philosophy. Since the early 1990s a rapidly growing number of Independent Baptist churches are no different in character than Southern Baptist, meaning they have given up on biblical separation, in practice if not in profession, and this change is reflected in the area of music, dress, Bible versions, associations, the character of the youth ministries, the type of literature that is used, and other things.

From its inception, the hallmark of New Evangelicalism was the rejection of separation. Harold Ockenga, who claimed to have coined the term “neo-evangelicalism” in 1948, defined it as “A REJECTION OF SEPARATISM” (foreword to Harold Lindsell’s *The Battle for the Bible*).

The New Evangelicalism aimed at a more positive and pragmatic philosophy as opposed to the “negativism” and “isolation” of fundamentalism.

In a 1947 speech at the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary, Ockenga said:

“We repudiate the ‘Come-outist’ movement ... We expect to be positive in our emphasis, except where error so exists that it is necessary for us to point it out in order to declare the truth” (Garth Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism*, 2008, p. 176).

Ockenga's philosophy was to be positive except in very "major" matters. The definition of major and minor, essential and non-essential, has changed dramatically since he made that statement, and as we will see, many of Ockenga's sons in the faith have reduced in value doctrines that he considered "essentials." This always happens.

Ockenga represented the changing mood of the sons of the old fundamentalists. The children were tired of exposing error and separating from compromised denominations and churches. They were tired of fighting. They were tired of being unpopular, tired of being outsiders, tired of not having enough "fun"! They wanted to broaden their associations and let their hair down a bit.

Since then New Evangelicalism has swept the globe. Today it is no exaggeration to say that those who call themselves evangelicals are New Evangelicals; the terms have become synonymous. Old-line evangelicals, with rare exceptions, either have aligned with the fundamentalist movement or have adopted the New Evangelical philosophy. The evangelical movement today is the New Evangelical movement.

Ernest Pickering observed:

"Part of the current confusion regarding New Evangelicalism stems from the fact that there is now little difference between evangelicalism and New Evangelicalism. The principles of the original New Evangelicalism have become so universally accepted by those who refer to themselves as evangelicals that any distinctions which might have been made years ago are all but lost. It is no doubt true to state that 'Ockenga's designation of the new movement as New or Neo-Evangelical was abbreviated to Evangelical. ... Thus today we speak of this branch of conservative Christianity simply as the Evangelical movement'" (*The Tragedy of Compromise*, p. 96).

What happened to evangelical churches in the 1950s is happening to fundamental Baptist churches today.

The doctrine of biblical separatism is being rejected at breathtaking speed. Consider some examples:

General Association of Regular Baptist Churches

The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC) was staunchly separatist when I was saved in 1973. The first church I joined was pastored by the dean of one of their colleges. They were very conservative and separatistic. They had high standards of separation from the world with a biblical emphasis on genuine holiness rather than mere external conformity. They were dead set against New Evangelicalism. Some of the GARBC writings on separation, such as "A Limited Fellowship or a Limited Message" by David Nettleton, helped me greatly as a young Christian.

By the 1990s, though, the GARBC was gazing with affection on the New Evangelical path. Many GARBC preachers, such as Bill Rudd and Eric Strattan of Calvary Baptist Church, Muskegon, Michigan, participated enthusiastically in the radically ecumenical Promise Keepers,

which yoked together with Roman Catholic priests. Rudd was chairman of the GARBC's Council of Eighteen leadership committee.

By the 1990s the GARBC-approved Cornerstone College was partnering with New Evangelical and charismatic organizations through its Mission Network News. These organizations included Baptist World Alliance, Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network, Evangelism Explosion, the Jesus Film Project, Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, Lutheran Bible Translators, and Youth for Christ International, which had long worked with Roman Catholics.

Richard Christen, who was elected speaker of the GARBC in 1996, said, "... instead of a wall around the GARBC, let's build a picket fence." That was a rejection of the old standard of separation, and the spaces within the GARBC's picket fence approach to separatism have grown ever wider.

Association of Baptists for World Evangelism

The Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE) moved in the New Evangelical direction in the 1980s. Dr. Ralph Colas and Dr. Ernest Pickering resigned from the board of ABWE in the late 1980s because of its compromise. ABWE's well-known work in Bangladesh, led by the medical doctor Viggo Olson, traded biblical separatism for pragmatism and popularity and compromised the truth by yoking together with organizations such as Wheaton College and the wretchedly apostate United Bible Societies. In the 1990s Charles Ware, prominent ABWE board member, spoke at an ecumenical conference in Indianapolis with men representing Promise Keepers and Campus Crusade. William Commons, ABWE Director of Enlistment, praised *Choices for Tomorrow's Mission* by David Hesselgrave of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. This book endorsed Billy Graham-style ecumenical evangelism.

Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty Baptist College

Founded in 1954, Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia, pastored by Jerry Falwell, was an "old fashioned" fundamental Baptist church, but radical changes were observed in the 1980s.

It was then that Falwell started supporting contemporary Christian music. Speaking at Word of Life in New York Falwell said: "Other than Heavy Metal and vulgar lyrics, it's all a matter of taste and has nothing to do with Christianity."

It was in the 1980s that Falwell formed the Moral Majority political action group, which was eventually composed of at least 30% Roman Catholics. In his 1987 autobiography, *Strength for the Journey*, Falwell called them "my Catholic brothers and sisters" (p. 371).

In 1987, Falwell took over the leadership of the sleazy charismatic PTL ministry, claiming that it was "certainly worth saving" (*Strength for the Journey*, p. 442).

In 1992, Falwell endorsed Chuck Colson's book *The Body*, which urged evangelicals to join forces with Roman Catholics and charismatics and which considered the Roman Catholic Church as a part of the "body of Christ."

In 1995, Falwell hosted a Promise Keepers (PK) conference. That same year a Catholic priest spoke at a PK meeting in Plainview, Texas. One of the PK directors was a Roman Catholic.

In October 1995, Falwell praised Billy Graham for his "long and faithful ministry" and did not have one word of warning for Graham's great compromise, his yoking together with Rome, his turning over of "converts" to Roman Catholic and modernistic Protestant churches, his praise of blaspheming modernists, etc. In 1997, Billy Graham was the commencement speaker at Liberty University.

In April 1996, hard rocking dc Talk drew the largest concert crowd in the history of Falwell's Liberty University.

In 1996, Falwell joined the SBC, and in 1999 Liberty University was formally approved as an SBC school.

By 1997, Falwell was yoked with the charismatic Integrity Music to train contemporary worship leaders at Liberty.

When Catholic Cardinal John O'Connor died in May 2000, Falwell praised him: "I am grateful that John O'Connor--a man of courageous faith--had such a profound influence on the Catholic Church through his fifty-five years of ministry. I pray that another pro-life, pro-family minister can be found to fill his significant and substantial shoes." Falwell said nothing about the fact that O'Connor's false gospel has sent multitudes to eternal hell. When the Apostle Paul was asked what he thought of those who preach a false gospel, his reply was quite different from Falwell's. Paul said, "Let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8-9).

In 2001 Falwell identified himself as a "contemporary fundamentalist," defined as "conservative in doctrine, moderate in attitude, progressive in methodology, and liberal in spirit."

Baptist Bible Fellowship International

The Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI) capitulated to the New Evangelical philosophy in the 1990s and the men with separatist convictions left the fellowship.

I first became aware of the rejection of separatism on the part of BBFI men when I wrote reports warning about Promise Keeper's ecumenism and received scathing rebukes from some BBFI preachers and Bible college students.

The writing was on the wall by 2002, when the BBFI annual conference was held at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Fairfax, Virginia. The music was led by a contemporary “worship team” composed of four women. Around that time the church dropped the “King James Only” clause from the by-laws and the New Living Translation and other corrupt versions are now used from the pulpit. The pastor sent out a letter to members saying, “With regard to dress and modesty issues, we enforce NO RULE on our folks. ... apparel issues are really of no concern to us.” The church’s Skate Night, which was sponsored by secular skateboarding companies, featured “throbbing Christian rock.” The church’s youth pastor had an earring and promoted the rock band P.O.D.

In 2003, the BBFI in the Philippines invited the country’s Roman Catholic president to speak at an evangelism conference. This is the new non-separatist BBFI.

Landmark Baptist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio

Landmark Baptist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, used to be an “old-fashioned” Baptist church with high standards of music and dress and stance against the modern versions.

In the 1990s the church took a turn away from its roots and at the heart of this change was music. In 1996, the church brought in a Campus Crusade band playing “high energy ‘50s and ‘60s rock and roll.”

In 2001, Mat Holman became the pastor. The church’s web site said, “Being a firm believer that church should be fun and on the edge, Matt puts all his energy into making Landmark a place where everyone belongs.”

The church now features a teen ministry called EnterRuption. “The purpose of EnterRuption is to create a relevant environment for students to bring their friends. We utilize a live band (secular and Christian music), dramas, skits and a relevant message.”

The pop group Jump5 performed at Landmark Baptist on Dec. 6, 2003. “The music of the Nashville-based group is thoroughly modern pop, high-spirited and 100% fun.”

Akron Baptist Temple, Akron, Ohio

Akron Baptist Temple was founded in 1935 by Dallas Billington. From the 1940s to the 1960s it had one of the largest Sunday morning crowds in the nation. In September 1960, during a Sunday School campaign, it averaged 6,000 in attendance, and was dubbed “the World’s Largest Sunday School” by Elmer Towns. In those days it was a typical Independent Baptist church, very conservative in music and dress, committed to the King James Bible, and aggressive in evangelism.

Upon the death of Dallas Billington in 1972, his son Charles assumed the pastorate. In 1996, Dallas' grandson Dallas R. Billington became pastor, and took the church in a contemporary direction.

Today, Akron Baptist Temple is an emerging church with a "traditional service" called The Temple and a raunchy contemporary service called The Bridge. The church offers a smorgasbord of worship "experiences." It's all about my tastes and my choices. In The Bridge a loud rock & roll band plays 7/11 (seven words sung 11 times) contemporary worship music in a darkened auditorium. The service is advertised as "creating an environment where people who are seeking God, can do so in a non-threatening, comfortable way." It is oriented toward "experiencing God."

It's amazing how all of these "non-traditional, think outside the box" churches use exactly the same language and exactly the same type of music and exactly the same philosophy and exactly the same clothing and tattoos and piercings. There is, in fact, less difference between them than there is between "traditional" churches. They aren't thinking outside the box. They are merely fitting into the contemporary box, which someone else invented and into which they gleefully stuff themselves. They think of themselves as following the beat of a different drummer, but they are actually walking lockstep to the rhythm of this world and the end-time spirit.

New Testament Baptist Church, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

New Testament Baptist Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, used to be a fundamental Baptist church. Pastor Dino Pedrone was a regular speaker at Highland Park Baptist Church when I was a student at Tennessee Temple in the 1970s, and he was a regular speaker at Southwide Baptist Fellowship conferences. In those days the church believed in biblical separatism, used only the King James Bible and sacred music, had dress standards, stood against rock & roll. But everything's changed now.

Along the way the church was renamed The Gathering Place. Today it promotes the watching of R-rated movies, recommends books by emerging church leaders who reject the infallibility of the Bible, such as Chris Seay, and feeds its youth a steady diet of rock & roll entertainment. The church's youth program, called YouthForce Dade, describes itself on the church web site as follows:

"Rock the Universe, All-Niters, Ski Trips, Summer Camps, Chubby Bunny, Water Balloons, Break dancing, WWE Wrestling, The Book Of Ross, Worship, Bible Study, Community, Little Debbie Snack Cakes, Madden, X-Box 360, LEE ADMIRAL MAJORS!, Eating Dog Food, Samurai Swords, Paintball, Skillet, Shipwrecked, Videos, Ultimate Frisbee, Man Hunt, And Much More!"

Notice that they even have a dab of Bible teaching in the midst of the carnal fun.

The church's 2011 Imagine Women of Faith conference featured ecumenical charismatic rockers such as Amy Grant, Mary Mary, Sandi Patty, and Sheila Walsh.

Jeff Royal, who lives in south Florida, says, "NTBC was once a fundamental church, but obviously it has changed. In my view the change began about ten years ago by allowing CCM to be integrated into the services. I've watched it over the years. It's sad because that's two churches I've personally known to have taken this dangerous path" (e-mail, January 19, 2010).

Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan

Another example of the collapse of separatism is Temple Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan. This church was pastored by J. Frank Norris from 1935 to 1950 and by G. Beauchamp Vick from 1950 to 1975. In past days, it was a conservative fundamental Baptist church that eschewed ecumenism, preached strong Bible doctrine, and promoted holy living and separation from the world. It used only the King James Bible. Preaching in 1975 at the 25th anniversary of the founding of the BBFI, G.B. Vick said:

"It's become fashionable to use many different versions of the Bible today. ... Listen! This King James Version, our English Bible, the Bible of our fathers and mothers, is the one that has come floating down to us upon the blood of Christian martyrs, our forefathers. It has been, I say, the one text of the Baptist Bible College, and it will be as long as I have anything to do with this school! [loud amens and applause] ... Let's stick to the old Book."

In those days at Temple Baptist Church it was the old Book and the old Paths, but that changed in the 1990s when the church got a cool new pastor named Brad Powell.

The church's music today is described at its web site as follows: "The Praise Bands consist of the piano, synthesizer, acoustic and electric guitar, bass guitar, and drums."

The church began having CCM concerts in the early 1990s, starting out with the softer rock groups. In September 1993, for example, they had Steve Camp. By October 1996, they featured Michael Card, who is radically ecumenical and works closely with Roman Catholic John Michael Talbot (who prays to Mary).

In February 2000, Temple Baptist changed its name to Northridge Church of Plymouth, Michigan.

The music style of the CCM groups at Northridge has gotten progressively harder. In September 2003, the church hosted Sonic Flood. Then they brought in Darlene Zschech (pronounced "check"), a female pastor who promotes radical ecumenism even with the Roman Catholic Church and unscriptural charismatic doctrines and practices.

Brad Powell associates with and recommends Rick Warren and Bill Hybels.

Southside Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina

This church was founded in September 1946. From 1965 to 1996 it was pastored by Walt Handford. His wife Elizabeth is one of the daughters of the famous fundamentalist preacher John R. Rice, founder of the *Sword of the Lord*, and it was an old-fashioned fundamental Baptist church until the 1990s.

That is when *Joyful Woman* magazine, for which Elizabeth Rice Handford was editorial consultant, began to feature ecumenical personalities such as James Dobson and Elisabeth Elliot, both of whom have close affiliations with the Roman Catholic Church.

In September 1993, the church hosted Ray Boltz for a CCM concert.

That same year Southside gave up the King James Bible in favor of the NIV. In support of this move, the speaker at Southside for the Sunday evening service, September 12, 1993, was Kenneth Barker, chairman of the New International Version translation committee.

By 1994, the church had a staff member who was also employed by the extremely ecumenical Campus Crusade for Christ. In an interview with *Charisma* magazine in 2001, Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright described his philosophy: “I have felt that God led me many years ago to build bridges. I’m a Presbyterian . . . and yet I work with everybody who loves Jesus, whether they be charismatic or Catholic, Orthodox or mainliners. . . . I’m not an evangelical. I’m not a fundamentalist.”

In 1996, Charles Boyd became pastor of Southside. He is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, both of which are New Evangelical to the core. Under his direction, Southside changed its name to Southside Fellowship.

Highland Park Baptist Church and Tennessee Temple

Highland Park Baptist Church, home of Tennessee Temple University, which came out of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1940s and was a prominent fundamental Baptist institution for half a century, was rocking out by the first decade of the 21st century.

In April of 2005 the church and school hosted a Christian rock concert featuring Bebo Norman, Fernando Ortega, and Sara Groves. It was held in Highland Park’s main auditorium. All three of these mainstream CCM musicians are enemies of biblical separatism. Ortega, for example, is an Episcopalian who has appeared at Billy Graham Crusades and Promise Keepers conferences. Bebo Norman has toured with Amy Grant.

The October 29, 2005, issue of the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* featured a picture of Tennessee Temple University students “worshipping” to contemporary rock music during a

Wednesday evening service. TTU president Danny Lovett said, “Each generation has different styles of music, and what churches have to realize is that we’ve got to meet those younger generations’ needs.”

In April 2006, the school’s College Days, when prospective students visit the campus, featured two Christian rockers, Toddiefunk and the Electric Church and Warren Barfield. Toddiefunk is the bass player for Toby Mac, formerly with DC Talk. Electric Church’s album *Ready or Not* featured “Holy Ghost Thang,” “Dance Floor,” “Naked,” and “Crazay.”

Tennessee Temple was one of the sponsors of the “Winter Jam Tour 2007,” which featured Christian rockers such as Jeremy Camp, Steven Curtis Chapman, Sanctus Real, and Hawk Nelson. Sanctus Real lead guitarist Chris Rohman says: “On the tours we’ve been lucky to be part of, the kids are really into the rockin’ songs ... every night on that tour kids were just screaming along to every word of every song.” Can you imagine the apostle Paul promoting this type of worldly thing? Matt Hammitt of Sanctus Real participated in the 2003 tour of the *!Hero* rock opera, which depicts Jesus as a cool black man. In *!Hero*, the Last Supper is a barbecue party and ‘Jesus’ is crucified on a city street sign. Sanctus Real and Steven Curtis Chapman played a concert in 2003 at St. Mary Seminary sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio. Retired Catholic bishop Anthony Pilla celebrated Mass at the event. Chapman told the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* that it’s “a good thing” that “the Catholic Church is showing a greater openness to contemporary Christian music” (*Plain Dealer*, Aug. 7, 2006).

By 2008, Highland Park Baptist Church had gone back into the Southern Baptist Convention.

A couple of years earlier Tennessee Temple brought in emerging church leader Dallas Willard for the Spring Lecture Series. Willard believes that “it is possible for someone who does not know Jesus to be saved” (“Apologetics in Action,” *Cutting Edge* magazine, Winter 2001). He says, “Jesus and his words have never belonged to the categories of dogma or law, and to read them as if they did is simply to miss the point” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. xiii). Willard is confused about salvation. He says, “Why is it that we look upon salvation as a moment that began our religious life instead of the daily life we receive from God” (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*). He rejects the gospel of Christ’s blood atonement (*The Divine Conspiracy*, pp. 44, 49). In his book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, which promotes Roman Catholic-style contemplative mysticism, Willard includes the endorsement of Sue Monk Kidd, a New Age “goddess.” (See “From Southern Baptist to Goddess Worship” at the Way of Life web site.) Willard promotes the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton and an assortment of heresy-laden mystic “saints.” Willard claims that God is not concerned about doctrinal purity. In fact, he says that God loves theologians of all types.

Southwide Baptist Fellowship

Southwide Baptist Fellowship, one of the largest independent Baptist networks, was also rocking out by the mid-2000s and had begun to capitulate to the New Evangelical philosophy. Many of

the speakers who preached at Southwide in October 2003 were from churches with contemporary rock worship services. Bo Moore, the moderator of Southwide that year, is the pastor of Heritage Baptist Church of Kentwood, Michigan, which advertised itself at that time as “a progressive independent Baptist church” with a “High Impact” Sunday evening service consisting of “praise and worship choruses led by our worship leader, praise team and band.” Another Southwide speaker that year, Johnny Hunt, is pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Georgia, a rocking Southern Baptist congregation that decidedly rejects “separatism.” A man wrote to me in 2003 and testified, “I visited there [Hunt’s church] and got up and left because of the wild, party-like atmosphere in their ‘worship’ service.”

By 2007, the number of Southern Baptist speakers at Southwide equaled the number of Independent Baptists, and two contemporary musicians provided music, including one who had appeared on the Crystal Cathedral television program with Robert Schuller (Don Boys, “Rise and Fall of Southwide,” CSTNews.com, May 16, 2007).

Cedarville University

Cedarville University (formerly Cedarville Baptist College) capitulated to the New Evangelical philosophy in the 1990s. In January 2001 the ecumenical charismatic Jim Cymbala of the Brooklyn Tabernacle was a featured speaker. When I warned about this in *O Timothy* magazine, I received a deluge of angry, mocking correspondence from Cedarville students. Many espoused the ecumenical doctrine. Consider a couple of examples:

“I agree that the charismatic movement is wrong in some large doctrinal issues, but we are still responsible to be unified in the Body of Christ.”

“What all Christianity lacks today is UNITY. ... I believe that if people want to believe or not believe something that is their judgment. ... [signed] Proud to be a Cedarville student.”

Many Cedarville students reproved me for speaking against Christian rock. For example, one student wrote,

“The fact that the choir at his [Cymbala’s] church sings what you would call ‘contemporary and jazzy’ music proves my theory that you must be a narrow-minded, brain-washed backwoods Baptist. It ----- me off [the Cedarville student used a profanity here] whenever anybody condemns a style of music simply because it is anything other than 18th century hymns or classical. There is no such thing as bad ‘music.’”

Another wrote,

“You can spend your whole life debating over issues as such, but until you receive the gift of genuine love in your heart, you’ll never understand or gain anything.”

(The communications I received in 2011 from students at West Coast Baptist College in response to my warnings about that school’s adaptation of CCM reminded me of those I had received a decade earlier from Cedarville students.)

In 2002, Cedarville was approved by the Southern Baptist Convention. The Baptist Press (Jan. 3, 2002) said that “Cedarville is one of the top feeder schools for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.” Cedarville President Paul Dixon “voiced excitement” for a “growing relationship with Southern Baptists.” Jack Kwok, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Ohio praised Cedarville and recommended the school to “all Southern Baptists,” observing that they “embrace our theology, our polity and our missiology.”

In October 2002, CCM musician Michael Card performed at Cedarville. Card has produced an album jointly with Roman Catholic John Michael Talbot, who prays to Mary and practices yoga. Card and Talbot perform ecumenical concerts together at Catholic and Protestant churches. Card led the “worship” for “an Evening of Friendship” with Mormons in Salt Lake City in March 2011. On that occasion he said that he “doesn’t see Mormonism and evangelical Christianity as opposed to each other; they are more like the two ends of a long thread -- part of the same thing” (*Deseret Morning News*, Nov. 16, 2004). He also said, “The older I get, I guess the more I want to integrate everything. I think it’s more important to be faithful than right.” Michael Card represents the new non-separatist Cedarville.

Joyful Woman magazine

Joyful Woman, a magazine for women published by the daughters of the late fundamentalist evangelist John R. Rice, adopted the New Evangelical philosophy in the 1990s. Joy Rice Martin is the editor; two other Rice daughters, Jessie Sandberg and Joanna Rice, are contributing editors; and Elizabeth Rice Handford is the editorial consultant.

The July-August 1991 issue contained a full-page ad for Campus Crusade’s Here’s Life Publishers, including the offer of a book entitled *Freeing Your Mind from Memories That Bind*. Campus Crusade was radically ecumenical since its inception and has had Roman Catholic staff members.

The Jan.-Feb. 1992 issue of *Joyful Woman* contained a full page ad for the ecumenical World Vision, as well as an advertisement for the New International Version. World Vision works closely with the Roman Catholic Church in many parts of the world.

The May-June 1994 issue of *Joyful Woman* featured James and Shirley Dobson on the front cover. Fifteen years earlier, Focus on the Family’s vice president Rolf Zettersten said he and his co-workers “cast their theological distinctives aside in order to achieve a common objective--to help families” (*Focus on the Family*, December 1989). Dobson has had a close and uncritical relationship with Roman Catholicism. The November 1989 issue of Focus on the Family’s *Clubhouse* magazine featured Mother Teresa. In November 2000, Dobson participated in a conference in Rome hosted by the pope’s Pontifical Council for the Family and by the Acton Institute, a Roman Catholic organization. Dobson also met with Pope John Paul II. The September 1990 issue of *New Covenant*, a Catholic charismatic magazine, praised Focus on the

Family and featured a smiling Dobson on the cover, while another of the articles promoted prayers to Mary.

The Joyful Woman Jubilee in October 1994 featured the ecumenical Elisabeth Elliot as a speaker. In July 1989 Elliot spoke at the Roman Catholic Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, a hotbed of Roman Catholic-Charismatic confusion. Franciscan University holds an annual conference to exalt the blasphemous Catholic dogmas that Mary is the immaculately conceived Queen of Heaven and advocate of God's people. In 1998, Elliot spoke at Notre Dame (Our Mother) University. When her brother converted to the Roman Catholic Church, Elliot said it is acceptable to be a Catholic and to celebrate the Catholic mass. She said this during a question-answer session at a gathering at the Wisconsin Expo Center on September 6, 1997, sponsored by WVCY radio in Milwaukee.

Other Examples

Northland Bible College, Central Baptist Seminary of Minnesota, and Calvary Baptist Seminary of Pennsylvania are also moving into the evangelical orb. They have bought into the New Evangelical "in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty" philosophy. Southern Baptist professor Bruce Ware was invited to teach courses at Northland. Calvary Baptist Seminary invited Southern Baptist leader Mark Dever to speak at their National Leadership Conference. Kevin Bauder of Central Baptist uses his blog to praise "conservative evangelicals" such as Southern Baptist Seminary head Al Mohler, John Piper, D.A. Carson, and R. C. Sproul.

Other examples could be given. In fact, this rejection of "separatism" is sweeping through fundamental Baptist churches like a hurricane.

Obviously the fundamental Baptist movement today is radically different in character from what it was when I was saved in 1973, and I am deeply concerned.

Separation is not a non-essential or an optional part of Biblical Christianity. It is not something that can be tossed overboard without grave consequences, not the least of which are the displeasure of the God who has commanded separation from sin and error. Separation is not a dirty word; it is not a path of hatred and bigotry; it is the wise path of protection from devouring wolves and end-time apostasy and enticing compromisers.

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

2 Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

2 Timothy 2:16-17 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

Even among those fundamental Baptist churches that still claim to believe in separatism, there is commonly a downplaying of it. There is a mood of neutralism. How many churches teach courses on biblical separation and host conferences on this important theme? How many provide solid separatist materials for the people? How many so well educate their people that they can mark and avoid the popular compromisers and heretics whose books fill the typical Christian bookstores? How many plainly identify and warn of the independent Baptist compromisers who are at the forefront of the breakdown in separatism?

Instead of lifting the voice of plain and loud and sustained warning against the compromise that has permeated fundamental Baptist churches, which we have documented in this report, the biggest IB colleges are busy promoting “Independent Baptist friendship” and urging the brethren to “stand together” and are blacklisting the few voices of warning that remain.

I am convinced that unless there is a dramatic change, most fundamental Baptist churches will be well down the New Evangelical-emerging path within 10-20 years.

In light of what we have witnessed in a mere two decades, we fundamental Baptist preachers need to ask ourselves some questions. What is to keep our churches from going the same direction as GARBC, BBFI, Southwide, Highland Park? What are we doing that these churches did not do? What are we *not* doing that these churches did do? If ever there was a time to learn from recent history, to refuse to follow “business as usual,” and to seriously batten down the hatches, it is now.

Pastor, is your church doing everything that is necessary to hold the line against the onslaught of the compromise that is leading to end-time apostasy?

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